

**Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary- May 16, 2007**

Committee members in attendance:

Richard Banel	Gary Gehling, Chair
Jan Eskola	Lou Piotrowski
Amy Mower	Alan Seid
Cindy Purdy	Sean Wilson
Phil Cloward, Vice Chair	Norma Otto

Determination of Quorum.

Gary Gehling called the meeting to order; a determination of a quorum was made.

Public Comment – First Period.

- Carole MacDonald informed the committee that she attended the Mt. Baker Scenic Byways conference this past Monday and Tuesday on her own behalf. The Mt. Baker EDA will be applying for grant money through WSDOT in either June or July. This funding will be applied towards hiring a consultant to work with the public and update the 1997 Mt. Baker Highway Corridor Management plan. This funding will also be applied to a finalized revised plan.
- Joan Airoldi, WCLS Director handed out information that showed that libraries could serve as a community focal point and gathering place. Some of the roles that the Kendall library could play would be providing services for teens; helping address illiteracy and poor reading skills among adults; providing ready access to information about government services, including making public documents and forms quickly and easily available; providing greater access to computers; and helping with job services. Joan stated that this information would assist the committee with its decision as to placement on the Project Prioritization List.
- Gary read an email from Georgina Head encouraging the Foothills Subarea Committee to include the library that will be built in Kendall as part of number 3-Kendall Town Park/Community Gathering Place.

Advisory committee review and approval of May 2, 2007 meeting summary.

The May 2, 2007 meeting summary was accepted as written.

Opportunity for committee members to raise issues or discuss matters not on the agenda

- Amy asked that the record reflect that she had requested to see Goal 2AA of the matrix in writing before submitting her approval. There was not consensus for that item on the matrix. Amy requested that the next time that the committee talks about the matrix that the agenda allow time to revisit policy #2AA-12 of the matrix. Matt will place the Policy Matrix on the next agenda.
- Gary asked Matt what were the chances that somebody could request commercial forestry be rezoned into some designation that would allow for residential development? Are there policies against that? Matt said Commercial Forestry is a designated resource land in the same way as Ag Land. When the request is brought before the County Council, the Council performs an initial screening process. Matt stated that it was possible to rezone these lands but not likely because of their

resource land designation. There are criteria that must be met, such as showing that there is a public interest in rezoning the land. Alan asked whether Rural Forestry was also a resource land and Matt stated that the Rural Forestry Comprehensive Plan designation is. Phil then gave the committee an historical perspective to a similar situation that had occurred in the past. He suggested the best way to keep those lands resource lands was to keep it in Commercial Forestry. The committee agreed to discuss this topic when next discussing policy.

- Committee discussed scheduling for upcoming meetings. It was decided to have an extra meeting on Thursday, June 7th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Kendall Elementary School. Jan reminded the committee that Glacier was scheduled for a power outage on either one of those days and that if information was going to be sent by email some committee members would not be able to receive that information.

Review prioritization of potential implementation projects in the Foothills Subarea (split into two lists: Potentially County funded and non-County funded).

- The committee spent some time discussing the policy that Matt was asked to write that addresses the committee's biennial review of the Project Prioritization List. This topic will be placed as an agenda item to be discussed at another meeting. As projects are completed other projects would move up and take their place, keeping in mind that some projects are more time sensitive than others.
- There was also discussion as to whether another committee, possibly an Implementation Committee should be created once this committee has completed its work and made recommendation to the planning commission.
- Sean was asked about the funding status of the Interfaith Community Health Satellite Clinic. As far as he knows they haven't heard back about the grant funding yet. If that option fails they have committed to finding other alternative funding sources. Should they get the grant funding they have six months to open the clinic doors. The grant is perpetual, it will renew each year.
- **Non-County Funded**
 - Combine #5 (Entire Foothills Subarea) Cell Phone Coverage **with** #15 (Entire Foothills Subarea) High Speed Internet Service into the #5 position, leaving position #15 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*

Combine #8 (Kendall) Study road and Pedestrian/Bike safety from SR 542/547 intersection to just past the Kendall Elementary School **with** #21 (Kendall) Study Roundabout at SR 542 and SR 547 and look at alternatives, leaving position #21 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.* **Item number 1 from Mt. Baker Memo dated 11-9-06:** The interchange of Hwy 542 and 547. This is a very dangerous spot and would directly benefit from increased signage (warning signs) and a reduced speed limit at the interchange. A Kendall Elementary School Study of the intersection showed drastically reduced rates of accidents when temporary orange warning flags were placed at the approaches to this intersection several years ago. Signs saying "Yield to Oncoming Traffic" and "Caution – Turning Traffic Ahead" at the approaches to this intersection would be of great help. **Item number 3 from Mt. Baker Memo dated 11-9-06:** The corner

of Hwy 547 where it turns ninety degrees from west to north directly in front of Kendall Elementary School. Two to three times per month vehicles fail to navigate that corner and contact the flower bed and the school district parking lot (most recently the car of a staff member was hit). The suggestion would be to again reduce speed on the highway, possibly install a device to slow speed (chicane or speed-bump) and to place a guardrail barrier between the roadway and the parking lot.

Combine #13 (Kendall) Mt. Baker School Memo 11-9-06 re: Road Improvement in Kendall and other areas **with** #19 (Entire Subarea) Better signage at curves in road- Better visibility-Blinking lights to improve safety, leaving position #19 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*: **Item number 2 from Mt. Baker Memo dated 11-9-06-** The widening of the shoulder or periodic areas of widened shoulders (In specified areas where the buses must stop) along 542 and 547 would reduce traffic congestion and reduce the slowing of traffic caused by the buses. **Item number 4 from Mt. Baker Memo dated 11-9-06-** The Hwy 547 "S" curves approximately 1 mile north of the Kendall school. There are numerous accidents on the stretch of the highway. There is very poor visibility for cars approaching from the rear of school buses stopping in this area. Slower speed and warning lights for the corners would be of great assistance. **Item number 5 from Mt. Baker Memo dated 11-9-06-** The roads within the Peaceful Valley and Paradise areas only allow for the buses to operate on the main roads. We realize that reconfiguration these roads is unlikely but the introduction of sidewalks would make the approaches and exits to and from the buses safer.

Combine #3 (Kendall) Town park/community gathering place **with** #27-Tie (Kendall) Library, breaking the tie for position #27. Position #3 will now read Library/Town Park/Community Gathering Place.

Switch position #2 (Columbia Valley UGA) Conduct a study to prepare Master Plan for industrial in UGA-Work with Port of Bellingham, EDA, etc. **with** position #10 (Entire Foothills Subarea) Welcome Center between Kendall and Maple Falls.

Combine #25-Tie (Glacier) Fire Prevention-Tree Modification to address potential wildfire **with** #32 (Columbia Valley UGA) Fire Prevention-Tree Modification to address potential wildfire-Talk to Fire Marshall re: Detailed How-To, leaving position #32 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*

The other #25 (Glacier) Study needs for wastewater disposal, which was tied, now becomes #26 on the non-County funded list- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*

Delete #37 (Kendall) East County Regional Resource Center in Kendall.

- Alan stated that item #4 – Study best practices for “local living economy” (buy local) as opposed to corporate chain economy- should be on both the non-County funding list and the County funding list. Alan stated that the original intention of this committee was that this project would be forwarded directly to the County Council

asking them to look at it and that the County Council would deal with it on a policy level. Alan said that Roland Middleton made it very clear that if the project wasn't in the top ten then it may not get addressed. The committee agreed by consensus and placed the project in the #5 position on the County funded list.

- Dennis Rhodes said that he and Roland Middleton had sat down with Matt and made determinations as to which lists the projects would be listed. They worked hard and made judgment calls as to where the funding would come from. The reality is that County expenditures are out pacing revenues and the County has had to go into its County reserves.
- Dennis stated that this is the same kind of information that he has had to speak to the committees in Birch Bay about. Birch Bay has 9 standing committees and trying to be a liaison to all of those committees is getting out of hand. The County is in the process of re-assessing, looking to combine some committees so that they can be staffed better. The County is spending down reserves as part of the budget. The County has less than half the revenues as at this time last year. We are in a downward cycle and what the County will pay for will also be a downward trend.
- Dennis then went on to assure the committee that he was not attempting to discourage them from sending items to Council but prioritization is critical. Pete and Dewey are tasked by the Whatcom County charter to have oversight on the budget and they are responsible under the law. Dennis stated he has resigned and stated his respect for the committee and the process that East County is involved in.
- Cindy proposed that the Deming Water Association be moved up on the non-County funded list. She felt it would help them in their goal. Norma and Phil voiced opposition to moving the Deming Water Association project. They believed that what needed to be done is to begin the process of becoming a water district and the Deming Water Association has been offered any assistance they need in meeting that goal. Receiving other funding may actually put them in jeopardy of being denied funding from the State sources. The committee agreed and the Deming Water Association project will remain in the #12 position on the non-County funded list.
- **County Funded**
 - Combine project item #7 (Columbia Valley UGA)- County Code Enforcement work with Paradise Lakes (Kendall Watch Plan) to clean up blighted properties **with** project item #17 (Entire Foothills Subarea) County enforcement of blighted properties leaving position #17 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*
- Dennis informed the committee that Sheriff Elfo was leading a program to work on Paradise Lakes with regard to County code enforcement and cleaning up blighted properties.

Combine project item #10 (Glacier)- Fire Prevention-Tree Modification to address potential wildfire **with** project item # 12 (Columbia Valley UGA)- Fire Prevention-Tree Modification to address potential wildfire-Talk to Fire Marshall re: Detailed How-To leaving position #12 empty for the time being- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*

- The committee then spent time discussing policies that were created addressing design guidelines and that there isn't a project to which those design guideline policies would refer back to. Design Guidelines need to be placed on the list as a project.

The committee agreed to place the project- Design Guidelines for each individual Small Towns as position #12 on the County funding list- *keeping in mind that the items will be re-numbered appropriately as the committee makes decisions.*

Committee consideration of potential goals & policies for the Subarea Plan that were submitted by the public.

- Rob Staveland proposed policy #3- *Allow for Rural development rights to be consolidated through purchase or exchange (PDRs and TDRs) subject to conditions.*
- After some discussion, Matt read the following policy:
revise the official Whatcom County zoning ordinance to designate Rural and Rural Forestry areas in the Foothills Subarea as Transfer of Development Right, TDR sending areas and the Columbia Valley UGA or other UGAs as TDR receiving areas in order to preserve open space in Rural and forestry areas. **The committee agreed by consensus.**

Reports from subcommittees reviewing

- Sean sent their subcommittee report to Bill Grimes. Jan's subcommittee is not yet finished. Once it is finished she will send it out to all committee members and to Matt in the meantime they will give a rough draft to the committee to review.

Public Comment- Second Period

- Sharon Digby representing Friends of the Deming Library gave the committee a letter in which she asked the committee to review the project list with the intention of giving the Deming Water Association project the high priority it deserves. Two important issues are contamination and fire protection. She requests that the committee put this first on the project list. She is aware that the water association has received some funds but doesn't think the amount is anywhere near the amount that is needed.

Sharon then provided comment as an individual. She voiced concern that Deming is not getting the representation that it needs and that if the Deming Water Association's needs are not going to make it into the top ten on the project list then Deming should not be a part of the Foothills Subarea. It may be better served in the Lynden Nooksack Subarea.

- Phil commented that he would be glad to discuss the Deming Water Association with Sharon Digby after the meeting. Norma stated that County support would not give the water association the funding that it needs to fix its infrastructure. Deming Water Association needs to become a water district so that they can apply for the funding that is available to fix their infrastructure.
- Larry Duncan stated that project #10 on non-County funding list is a long-term project that's years away and that maybe the Deming Water Association project could be placed in that position and get its funding more quickly and be cycled off the list. He also commented on multi-modal transportation and the park and rides didn't even make it into the top ten on the project list.

- Dennis stated the Roland Middleton is currently working with a group of people and are planning the Welcome Center. Phil is also involved in that process and will speak with Larry more about it after the meeting.
- Mike Head asked about the reserve fund that Dennis had commented on earlier and whether the spending that has occurred from that fund is in the budget to spend down in 2007 and 2008?
- Dennis suggested to Mike Head that he could get specific information from Brad Bennett in the Whatcom County Finance Department. Dennis stated that the point he was attempting to make was that because revenues weren't keeping up with expenditures that it was very important in the prioritization of these projects to decide what would be in the top 10-12 on the list.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Pam Brown